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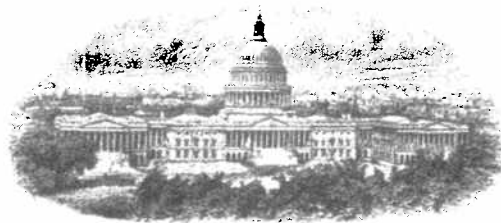
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SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0923

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

- ☐ 2353 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0923
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-1313
FAX: (202) 225-1171
- ☐ 2701 W. OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD
SUITE 200
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33311
TELEPHONE: (954) 733-2800
FAX: (954) 735-9444
- ☐ MANGONIA PARK TOWN HALL
1755 E. TIFFANY DRIVE
MANGONIA PARK, FL 33407
TELEPHONE: (561) 881-9618
FAX: (561) 881-9879

www.alceehastings.house.gov

August 27, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On June 22, I sent you a letter signed by 77 Members of Congress urging you to take leadership in working together with Congress to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell and to replace it with a policy of inclusion and non-discrimination. More than two months later, I have yet to receive an official response.

I am deeply disappointed that you have not responded to my letter and that we are not addressing Don't Ask, Don't Tell at this time. With the recent addition of 17,000 American troops to Afghanistan and the possibility of another request for even more troops from General McChrystal in the coming weeks, I am sure that you will agree that we cannot afford to lose any of our dedicated, highly-qualified service members to Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

As you know, we lose approximately two service members every day to Don't Ask, Don't Tell. While I commend Secretary Gates and the Pentagon's general counsel for their continued efforts to identify possible provisional measures, you can take action right now. I sincerely hope that your administration will make Don't Ask, Don't Tell a priority and do everything in its power to repeal this ridiculous, bigoted law once and for all.

Mr. President, I am extremely proud of the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces and truly appreciate the countless sacrifices they continue to make every single day to protect this nation and the American people. They deserve better than Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

Please know that I will continue to monitor this situation closely and stand ready to assist you and my colleagues in Congress in repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress